1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

(*ukumoga*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Nyakyusa are colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area; but living out in the bush is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Nyakyusa dictum: 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

The basis of Nyakyusa sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Nyakyusa informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwaisumo explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village', he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

Another informant added: 'Boys usually move of their own accord; if they don't their fellows mock them saying: "Why do you sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your mother when she puts on her bark-cloth? . . . You sleep with your mother and see the evil things of your father and mother. Perhaps they think you are asleep, but you see them." '

Sons and mothers are separated at night, but the boys come to their mothers' houses for food; fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law are completely segregated from the time a girl is betrothed or, if she has been betrothed in infancy, from the time she is about eight years old. Her father-in-law is pointed out once to the newly betrothed girl, and after that she must never look at him. She never enters a house in which he is, and she leaves a path if she catches a glimpse of him, or is warned by her friends that he is approaching; she also avoids his name and anything associated with him, being particularly careful to avoid going near the bed in her mother-in-law's house, should she visit her mother-in-law during her father-in-law's absence. The avoidance is extended to a large group of kinsmen—her father-in-law's brothers and cousins, her mother-in-law's brothers, the husbands of her mother-in-law's sisters, and the fathers-in-law (direct and by extension) of each of her own sisters;[1] but it is *not* extended to the father-in-law's village-mates. In practice, the forms of avoidance vary with the actual relationship—the more distant the connection the less strictly are the rules observed—and with the locality, for the Nyakyusa proper avoid in-laws more carefully than the Kukwe do. A Nyakyusa wife, for example, should *never* enter her father-in-law's house, but a Kukwe wife may do so during his absence.

The Nyakyusa argue, cogently enough, that it would be quite impossible for father-in-law and daughter-in-law to live in the same village and avoid one another as they do; and indeed the difficulties of avoidance are apparent at ceremonies when members of different villages are congregated. Then the women are on the watch all the time, and one or another is constantly taking refuge in a hut, or in the bananas, as her friends warn her of the approach of a 'father-in-law'. The practical difficulties were obvious when we attended a funeral ceremony at Mwambelike's

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her chair and sat on the floor. We said to Mwaipopo as he entered: 'There is a daughter-in-law here.' He said: 'That's all right, she is enjoying the company of Kagile (M.W.)', but he was obviously restive, and went outside as soon as food appeared. He said to G.W.: 'That's quite all right, let them go on enjoying each other's company. She (i.e. S—) does not avoid me because M— (a local missionary) brought her to me one day and I killed a bull for them, but let us stay outside now, for they would be ashamed to eat.' The women protested very much saying *they* would go out, but the chief would not agree. As soon as they had drunk their tea they hurried off, and crouching down with their backs towards the men they answered their farewell greetings.

In reply to queries as to why they insist that father-in-law and daughter-in-law avoid one another, the Nyakyusa relate a myth of incest between them: 'Long ago a chief's son married a very beautiful wife. The boy's father saw the girl and after one look desired her, for she was very beautiful, and he said: "She is fit to be a chief's wife (*umwehe*)." Men said this was a very bad thing and agreed that in future they would not look at their daughters-in-law. That is how avoidance began. It was for fear of fathers making love to their sons' wives.' This myth is related with some diffidence, and not everyone knows it, but it was told us, or referred to, repeatedly, and may be taken as current in the society. One informant, a very intelligent woman doctor, also associated seeing a father-in-law with seeing his sexual activities. 'We think that to see your husband's father is very rude, because it is as if you saw him sleeping with your husband's mother. You compare, you see, your husband's body and you see your husband's father's body. It is very bad.'

Age-villages are then associated with the feeling that fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law must be kept completely separate lest they should commit incest, and that adolescent youths should not have any glimpse of the sexual activities of their parents; but the separation of the generations is not complete, for marriage with the daughter of a village neighbour is approved, provided he is not an *immediate* neighbour. Mwakionde explained that in the old days people disliked marriage with the daughter of a next-door neighbour because she was 'like a daughter'—'the fathers ate *embalaga* (a dish made with bananas) together'—but marriage with the daughters of other village-mates was always approved.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

838 villages—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no court case, and the older men treat the practice tolerantly as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to [684] have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (*vide* Document, p. 196). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this: if they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

864 It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that some knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

• 534 As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian 795 dogma that sex relations should only take place between adult 177 married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external sex relations before betrothal, or in the 'bride's' hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

ance among Nyakyusa Christians, and the tendency for fathers and sons to build fairly close to one another.

The forms of display approved among Christians are also changing with the change in the sex code. The nakedness of the Nyakyusa shocked the missionaries, and it is insisted that Christian women, as well as men, should wear at least one cloth; also many of the traditional dances and songs are felt by the Nyakyusa converts themselves to be incompatible with the profession of Christianity, consequently at funerals and weddings there is often a group of Christians dancing quite separately from pagans, and singing their own song, which, more often than not, is a hymn. A wedding dance to a hymn does not appear incongruous to Nyakyusa, as it does to European observers.

e. Wisdom

There is a very close connection between the values we have cited, and all save one are coherent with one another. The enjoyment of good company implies observance of the rules of decency; *ukwangala* is between equals, not between parents and children; it merges into neighbourliness, for one who does not help, or seek help from, a neighbour is unfriendly (*atikwangala kanunu*); and it is dependent upon that generous hospitality which is one of the manifestations of dignity (*ubusisya*).

The one value which is not wholly coherent with the others is the value of display (*ukumoga*). Certain forms of display are compatible with urbanity and friendliness between neighbours, but the swaggering truculence of the warrior is not—it is liable to breed quarrels between fellow villagers, as well as with outsiders; and display also ceases to be compatible with other values when it involves adultery. The friends of a woman who has eloped with a lover may greet her with the phrase: '*Ndaga, umogile*!' which literally translated means 'Thank you, you have displayed yourself', and implies, 'Congratulations! Had a good time?' But no Nyakyusa would maintain that to commit adultery was, in general, good.

The all-embracing virtue to the Nyakyusa is wisdom (*amahala*). It includes the enjoyment of company and the practice of hospitality, for no man is wise who is surly, or aloof, or stingy; it includes neighbourly behaviour, dignity, and respect for law and

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sets have club houses in which young men sleep. Among the Cewa, though boys do not move out of the parent village, they have a special hut in which they sleep together from the age of five or six.[1] But among all these people the age-set scatters at marriage, each young man building his permanent home, to which he brings his wife, alongside his kinsmen or, in the case of the Cewa, alongside his wife's kin.

The peculiarity of the Nyakyusa then consists in the fact that contemporaries live together permanently through life, not merely as bachelors: age-villages appear in an isolated area surrounded (so far as we know) by people with no similar institution.

We cannot hope to explain how, or when, age-villages developed among the Nyakyusa: there is no reference to them in such documents as exist, and we could trace no oral tradition regarding their origin. Even the historian Mwandesi (cf. p. vi) had no idea whether age-villages were introduced by the incoming Nyakyusa chiefs, or were found by them among the previous inhabitants of the valley, or were invented after the conquest. We can, however, inquire into the social characteristics associated with age-villages. *What are the peculiarities of Nyakyusa society not found in societies with kinship villages?* In this chapter we attempt to answer that question.

b. Age-villages and incest

The Nyakyusa themselves associate living in age-villages with decency in sex life—the separation of the sex activities of successive generations, and the avoidance of incest. When asked why small boys build apart from their parents they refer to the danger of a growing boy overhearing lewd talk between his parents, or seeing them unclothed (*vide supra*, p. 82); and they enlarge on the difficulties of father- and daughter-in-law avoidance were father and son to live in the same village—an avoidance which is consciously related to the fear of incest between father- and daughter-in-law (*vide supra*, p. 85). We may add also the fear of young men seducing their fathers' junior wives, who are often girls of their own age. Nyakyusa informants did not mention this last point as a reason for living in age-villages, but it is significant

[1] A. G. O. Hodgson, 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of the Dowa District of Nyasaland Protectorate', *J.R.A.I.*, LXIII (1933), p. 189.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

that adolescent sons are not permitted to visit their homes after dark, and when they come by day for their meals they are often required to eat in the open court-yard and not 'hide in the bananas or huts' lest they make love to their fathers' wives. They do not sit about in the men's village. Thus, although the villages of fathers and sons adjoin until the sons 'come out', the young men are physically separated from their young 'mothers'.

The feeling that sons should not be cognizant of the sex activities of parents, and that father-in-law and daughter-in-law should avoid one another is not, of course, peculiar to the Nyakyusa; all we seek to show is that the extreme elaboration of these avoidances among the Nyakyusa is dependent upon the existence of age-villages. Whereas a Pondo daughter-in-law must never walk across the courtyard of the kinship village in which she lives, or approach the cattle byre or the men's side of her mother-in-law's hut, lest she come too near her father-in-law, yet, living in the same village, she necessarily sees him daily; the Nyakyusa daughter-in-law, living in a separate village, need not (and should not) set eyes on her father-in-law after her marriage. Where the territorial segregation of fathers and sons is blurred (as at Rungwe) there father- daughter-in-law avoidance is less strictly observed. The Nyakyusa regard this extreme form of avoidance as a peculiarity of their culture which has been imparted by them to the small groups (such as Ndali, Penja, and Nyika) whom they are assimilating.

Father- and daughter-in-law incest is clearly a potential danger in a society in which cattle are controlled by middle-aged and elderly men, who frequently have to choose between taking another wife themselves and giving cattle for a son's marriage, and who are accustomed to marrying young girls of an age suitable to be wives to their sons. But we cannot show that the danger is *greater* among the Nyakyusa than it is among other patrilineal cattle people such as the Pondo, Zulu, or Swazi, who do not find it necessary to segregate fathers- and daughters-in-law in different villages.

On the other hand the danger (common to all polygynous societies) of sons seducing their fathers' wives is exaggerated among the Nyakyusa by the absence of circumcision, the late marriage age of men, the very early betrothal and marriage of girls, the high degree of polygyny, and the practice of sons

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

enjoy limited sex relations with a relatively large group of unmarried girls.[1] But the Pondo have exogamous clans numbering, on the average, 3,000 to 4,000 members; marriage into the clan of either parent or either grandmother is prohibited; and clans, though not strictly territorial groups, have a territorial basis. Therefore very many of the adolescents growing up in one area are forbidden to flirt together or marry. Moreover, clan incest is regarded with great horror and is associated very closely with witchcraft. A pregnant woman (who must confess her sins and her dreams that she may have safe delivery) is specifically instructed to confess any flirtations within the prohibited degrees, and to confess if she has had witch-lovers.[2] Even in town, where so many traditional taboos are disregarded, clan exogamy is still insisted upon by Xhosa-speaking people.[3]

Furthermore, in Pondo belief the 'familiar' commonly appears as a European or light-coloured person.[4] and South Africa is a caste society in which sex relations between white and black are very strongly disapproved. We conclude, therefore, that the 'familiar' stands for the embodiment of sex temptation, of forbidden lust, and that the reason why there is so much emphasis on sex in Pondo witch beliefs is that Pondo live in a society in which sex relations between members of certain large groups who are mutually attractive, are regarded with horror.

In Nyakyusa society the pattern is quite different. Sex relations are prohibited only between the descendants of a common great-grandfather, who are in any case scattered in different villages and not constantly meeting one another. And not only are Europeans very few in Nyakyusa country, but the taboo on sex relations between the colour groups is much less strong than in

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180–4.
It has been suggested by European doctors that limited sex relations are in themselves psychologically disturbing (*cf.* M. Kohler, M.D., *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, p. 33–5), while Africans have argued that such a practice prevents psychological disturbances (*cf.* J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, pp. 155–60).
[2] Hunter, op. cit., p. 148.
[3] Hunter, op. cit., p. 483; R. Levin, *Marriage in Langa Native Location* (Communications from the School of African Studies, University of Cape Town), pp. 13–14.
[4] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 482, 491. My further investigations since *Reaction to Conquest* was published indicate that the 'familiar' is usually described as a European when it takes human form.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

South Africa. Sex hunger obviously exists in the large group of bachelors and among the wives of elderly polygynists, but its satisfaction through adultery is not regarded as shameful or horrible. Adultery was formerly extremely dangerous, and is now expensive, but it is not disgraceful. Thus desire, being fully conscious, is not transformed into dreams and fantasies.

It is possible that all witch beliefs are an expression of lust, directed by jealousy, envy, and hatred. Certainly sex lust and the lust for good food appear in the accounts of witch beliefs in one area after another in Africa. The Zande fear that a glimpse of the cats associated with women witches, and particularly with Lesbian practices in the harems of princes, will kill a man, is a classic example of the one;[1] while the Lovale,[2] Thonga,[3] and Nyanja[4] belief that witches kill in order to eat the corpses of their victims is an example of the other. We do not suggest that the Nyakyusa alone believe that the lust for prized food is a motive for witchcraft, or that they think it is the sole motive,[5] but that their emphasis on lust for food, and the particular form it takes, is directly related to the age-village organization. It is significant that the stress laid on sharing food in the village diminishes along with the belief in witchcraft, and a rigid insistence on living with age-mates.

f. '*The breath of men*'

And what of the belief in 'the defenders' of the village and the chilling 'breath of men'? Is the idea that contemporaries have a mystical power over one another a function of their living together—a correlate of an age-village, as opposed to a kinship village, organization? The Nyakyusa concept of witchcraft is similar in many respects to that of the Azande, the Thonga, and the Lovale, but, as we have shown, the Nyakyusa differ from these other peoples in the emphasis they lay on the lust for food as a motive for witchcraft; they differ also in the belief that a power

[1] E. E. Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., pp. 51–57.
[2] C. M. N. White, op. cit., pp. 96–7. [3] Junod, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 506.
[4] B. Malkebu, A. Kumbanga, G. Chipengule, B. Chisunsi *Makolo Athu* Nyasaland Education Department, Zomba (1945).
[5] For the sex associations in Nyakyusa witchcraft *vide supra*, pp. 94–5. There is a hint of the lust for food among the Pondo in the idea that the baboon familiar milks cows, and Thikolose steals food. Hunter, op. cit., pp. 275–81, 287.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

them knocks on the wall when he has succeeded, and the officiant raises the *akalulu*, the trill of applause and triumph[1] which is also the war-cry, and shakes a basket of seeds by the door shouting: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing!' Until this ritual connection the heir and the widows remain continent, and great importance is attached to the success of the heir in having intercourse with all the widows. Should a widow refuse the heir after touching the ash it is said that she will either die herself or cause any man she lies with to die of 'the ash'; but if she escapes before being smeared with ash then she is safe. The heir is also in danger if a widow should refuse him after he has touched the ash.

The morning after the ritual union the heir is formally summoned out of the hut by a man knocking on the door and crying: 'Come out, war has come (*Soka! ubwite bwisile*),' i.e. sexual intercourse has begun. He sits on a stool in the doorway of the hut and is greeted by the children of the deceased: 'Good morning, Father.'

iii. '*The gasping cough.*' Each of the inherited women goes off to her own father's homestead with the filth (*indafu*) of intercourse on her. She does not even wash her hands, and she takes with her cooked bananas which she has smeared with her husband's semen and her own emission. This she buries in the banana grove in her father's homestead in which he prays to his ancestors. She takes meat to her father if an animal has been killed at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. The heir similarly goes to his father's homestead (or that of his father's heir) with cooked bananas to be buried in his father's sacred grove. Each wife drinks beer mixed with medicine with her father and other close relatives. From the time when the heir sleeps with the widows until this ritual is performed, they cannot visit their parents nor can their children do so (though usually children come and go freely in the home of their mother's people) and, more particularly, a widow must not drink from her mother's cup, or eat with her, or sit over her fire, or touch her hand. It is believed that, if the ritual is neglected, those for whom it should have been performed will be seized with a racking cough (*ingotolo*) and diarrhœa. Even Christians, who eschew the other parts of the death ritual, often participate in the *ingotolo*.

When a woman has died she should be replaced by a sister or brother's daughter, just as the dead man is by a brother or son,

[1] The closest equivalent in our society is cheering, but the *akalulu* is raised by women.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

587 and the widower should refrain from sexual intercourse with his
834 other wives until the ritual union with the 'wife who replaces the dead' (*unsasi*) at the 'shaving of the sprouting hair'. Nowadays, however, widowers do not keep this taboo strictly, and many lie with their other wives after the 'picking up of pumpkin-seeds'.

765 Before the 'shaving of the sprouting hair' for a dead woman her brother (or, if he is dead, his heir) goes to cut down the bananas at her former husband's home, as a sign that kinship between them is at an end, but he is persuaded to desist. Mwakwelebeja, an elderly man who had just performed it after the death of his sister Seba, the wife of the chief Mwaipopo, in company with his neighbour Mwaiselage and his wives, thus described the ritual:

> We arrived and our wives and the wives of Mwaipopo went into the house to wail, and we men went in too and cried: 'Alas father! Alas father!' Then we seized my *umwipwa*, the girl Ijonga, the daughter of Seba, and went off with her. The women, the chief's wives, fought with us and cried: 'Bring a cloth, bring a cloth!' They gave us a cloth and we left the girl. Then I seized a bill-hook and began to cut down the banana grove. I cut indeed! They cried: 'Not the banana grove!' and gave me another cloth.
>
> QUESTION: What does this mean?
>
> MWAKWELEBEJA: When we seize the girl it is as if we said: 'My child has died, the kinship is finished, it is finished here, I'll be off with my sister's children (*abipwa*), they are *my* children.' And when they give me a cloth they pay saying: 'Father, we pray you, don't! There is still kinship, Father, you are not a stranger! Do not terminate the kinship, it is still there.' And when I cut the banana grove it means the same; it means my child has died here, it is finished here, the kinship has ended. And when they give me a cloth, they beseech me saying: 'Not the banana grove, Father, the kinship is not yet finished, it still exists!' Formerly, if they were rich they gave a bull. . . . We were unfortunate, Mwaipopo paid us nothing.
>
> After I had cut the grove I gave bananas and meat (from a cow I had brought to kill) to all my sisters' children, on the roadway (outside the homestead). I stood with my back to them and handed the bananas and meat over my shoulder. They came up behind me one by one, and took the food in their mouths. [This was demonstrated, dramatically.] Yes, it is a ritual. If we do not give them bananas and meat, their legs swell up, they fall ill and become mad.

765 Some of our informants maintained that this ritual of cutting
184 the bananas was performed only when the deceased's family had no girl to send in her place. Mwakwelebeja and Mwaiselage, how-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

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354 new home, and her mother-in-law provides her with fire and a pot.

783 After the bride has had full intercourse with her husband she cannot return home, or see her own parents, until she has taken them the ritual *ilibalaga*. After sexual intercourse she wipes her husband's genitals with her hands, then wipes them on a fowl and some millet: these together form the *ilibalaga*. In the morning she goes off without washing—'with the filth of intercourse on her'—to her parents' house, taking the fowl and millet with her. The fowl is killed on a path and cooked with *ikipiki* medicine and, if the bride is the eldest daughter of one of the father's first two wives, her father and mother eat it together. Her mother eats alone if she is a younger daughter, or the mother is a junior wife. If the father is a chief the husband may kill a young bull and beef is sent in place of the hen.

●834 After eating the *ilibalaga* her parents resume intercourse[1] which has been taboo from the time the girl first menstruated. If no hen is brought because the husband is poor, the parents still resume sexual intercourse, but the bride, when she visits her home, must not take water from her mother's pot. Someone else draws for her and she drinks it outside from a separate calabash. If she drinks [753] inside, or if her mother uses the calabash she has used, it is believed that her mother will get diarrhœa. She also avoids her father's bed and stool.

606 With the ritual of marriage must be included the negative ritual of avoidance between a woman and her husband's father and between those identified with him or her. The taboo applies from the time of betrothal or, if the girl has been betrothed as an infant, from well before she reaches puberty, and forbids father-in-law and daughter-in-law ever to look at one another or meet face to face on the pathway, or enter the same house, much less speak together. As we have seen, a similar taboo applies between the bride and her own father during her seclusion, but is relaxed when he [184] has given her a gift. Between a woman and her father-in-law, however, it is never relaxed, except among the more sophisticated
773 Christians. A myth of origin tells of a case of incest between father-
606 in-law and daughter-in-law which led to the establishment of the
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[1] Kasitile maintained that if the mother has not reached the menopause the parents do not lie together until the daughter's pregnancy is apparent. 'For the mother to conceive before the daughter is forbidden, but old women are fruits sucked dry.' Mwakionde denied any danger in mother conceiving before daughter.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 751 The first act of the ritual, the giving of the *undumila*[1] medicine to the girl, is a symbol of sexual intercourse, and it is thought to be a prophylactic against pain in intercourse, frequent or painful periods, and injury from contact with those who are 'heavy'. 'It is given so that her belly may not be painful,' said Mwaisumo's mother, an elderly woman. Kasitile's wife explained: 'The pungent root is the penis of the husband, the cup is her vagina, the salt, also pungent, is the semen of her husband. Biting the root and eating the salt is copulation.' Mwakionde's wife gave a similar interpretation:

841 751 The *undum'la* is put through the leaf of a bark-cloth tree, shaped into a cup, and it is a sign of man and woman, the penis in the vagina. It is similar to the plantains which we give her when we wash her. The plantains are a symbol of the husband. If we do not give her the *ikipiki* medicine the blood never dries up, and it is the same with the *undumila*. If it is not given she constantly has periods and is barren. Yes, some have a period twice in one month—those who have rotted. Only a few are like this, not many. . . . The *undumila* is given to the girl at once, in the mouth as soon as she grows up, so that she can go about without fear; otherwise, if she washes without having had it, then a heavy one may walk over her footprints, that is overstep her, and she will not bear a child, she menstruates continually.

Kasitile's wife said much the same: 'If the heavy ones have overstepped her, her body rots. The man is not sterile, but the woman is; the man's semen is fertile, but the woman has painful periods. It is the pain of periods we symbolize in the sharpness of the *undumila* and salt.'

827 ● 834 The heavy ones (*abasito*), feared both during the puberty ritual and by a mother with a new-born child, are those who sleep with their husbands. They include women both before and after conception. 'When the pregnancy is advanced and the husband has left off sleeping with his wife, then she is not heavy and she can keep a mother with a new-born baby company and hold the baby. A man who is sleeping with a woman is also heavy. They say: "He will overstep us." ' This was the statement of Mwakionde's wife and Kasitile, questioned separately, confirmed every point. We then asked Kasitile: 'How is the heaviness (*ubusito*) from lying with a man dangerous to those going through puberty and childbirth?'

Kasitile: 'Because those who are with their husbands are heavy, they are strong, their fellow the bride (*unsungu*) is empty, light in

[1] *Undumila* is derived from *ukuhumila*: to bite, to be painful.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

827
ront. See, the man ejects semen! Does it not go inside? The woman 834
ecomes heavy and oversteps the bride.'

Even after she has been treated, the bride avoids any close con- 834
act with those who are 'heavy'; in particular they are excluded 833
rom her hut. Her own mother 'does not sleep with the father at
ll from the time the girl grows up until she goes to her husband,
nd begins intercourse with him. It is taboo. She says to her hus-
and: "See, I am keeping my child company." ' But the 'play' of
er companions does not matter, for intercourse *inter crura* does not
nake anyone heavy; it is the semen of a man in a woman's belly
vhich makes her heavy, and her husband also, through contact
vith her.

The second medicine used at the puberty ritual is the *ikipiki*,[1] 789
nade from the bark of certain small-leafed forest trees. The same
pecies is used by many Nyakyusa families, but the identity of
he person who provides it is very important, for it is identified
vith the blood (*ililopa*) of the family. In the puberty-marriage
itual the groom's mother provides the *ikipiki* with which the bride
vashes at her husband's (if she is a senior wife), at the rite of
putting her in' (*ukwingesia*), at the second washing with her hus-
and, at the shaving, and at the washing before jumping over fire.
The same medicine is used each time. It is also sprinkled on the
ananas she eats at the *ukwingesia*. The bride's own mother, how-
ver, provides the *ikipiki* which is added to her porridge and buried
nder the hearth the day she first menstruates, and that used for
washing her father, or brother, and mother at the *ukwingesia*.
Also, should it be known that the bride is not a virgin, the mother-
n-law will refuse to bring her *ikipiki* and it must be provided for
ach rite by her mother. The medicine is in itself awesome (*nsisya*).
Kasitile's wife remarked one day that the bride slept with one of
her maids in front of her, 'at her stomach', and one behind. We
asked why. She replied: 'That *ikipiki* medicine! It's awesome. She 789
fears to be alone.' 'If someone has not given her the *ikipiki* to drink 841
and heavy ones cook food and give it to her she goes bad, she has
periods without cessation.' 'The mother gives porridge with *ikipiki*
to the girl and buries some under the hearth. That means may she
be heavy in her stomach, for if heavy ones warm themselves at the
fire in the house, she is in danger of going bad, she will have a con-
tinuous issue of blood.' 'If the *ikipiki* were not given, her period

[1] *Um-piki*: a tree of any species. *Iki-piki*: medicine made from the bark of certain species (one is a Mussaenda) and used in the rituals of death, puberty, and birth. [824]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 585 at the stream comes from the girl's father.[1] He spits on it and gives it to her mothers to dress her in at the stream.' (Kasitile.) Angombwike explained further:

> Dressing her in it means her father has made her grow up. It means: 'Now she is a woman let her act like a woman.' They symbolize the genitals (*ikisepe*) of the man, because among us, according to Nyakyusa custom, in front is a woman and behind a man. They tell her, saying: 'You have grown up, you have work [i.e. intercourse] with a man.'
>
> QUESTION: *Kipetule?*
>
> AGOMBWIKE: *Kipetule* is very old. It's to bless her and say: 'You have grown up. When you go to your husband it will not be painful. Have intercourse.' If the woman is no longer a virgin they do not speak of it. They say she knows already, she has learnt on the veld.

834 *Kipetule*, like *undumila*, is a word not used in mixed company. Once Kasitile whispered, when inquiry had been made, unwittingly, before other people: 'No, Mwaipaja (G. W.), there are children present, and my senior, that is bad. But when there are only cross-cousins (*batani*), then . . .' So the conversation changed.

881 585 783 The washing at the stream is a final purification. Lyandileko said:

> We give the bride brass body-rings because she was not wearing good things (*inunu*), she was filthy during the puberty ritual. We wash her and put on body-rings and a cloth, and she stands in the winnowing basket, because now she must not step on dirt (*ububibi*).

881 585 The earth, it will be remembered, is associated with faeces, corpses, and the shades. Then comes the triumphal return to her father's house, the girl carried high, and the women dancing. 'Crying "*Nisya*" and carrying the girl, on return from bathing, is for display.' Lyandileko, asked the reason for throwing millet in the winnowing basket, replied:

> It's to say it [the food, i.e. the meat of the bull of puberty] is ours. We examine the girl at the river. If she is rubbish (*lenga lindu*) we do not rejoice. The mothers of the girl give gifts (*ukubonola*). It's a rejoicing because it's ours, it's ours, the girl is virgin.

Nisya, the word the women repeat as they carry and dance with the bride on the return from the stream, was interpreted by Angombwike as meaning: 'Put me down.'[2] 'It is traditional and

[1] Mwakionde denied this, *vide infra*, p. 109.

[2] *Ukwisya*: to put down behind (as opposed to in front).

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

have thought of it now, this is the cow.' Then, in the evening, the mother's brother blows out water in the banana grove and prays much to the fathers. And when he has prayed he says: 'Send the girl to a doctor to drink medicine.' Then the girl bears a child. The pagans say of us Christians when we have children without performing the ritual: 'You have a medicine, you are baptized with a medicine.'

Mwakobela confirmed that the mother's brother, like the father, may prevent a girl bearing a child.

Yes, it is so, if I do not give marriage-cattle for my wife our child will not bear. We go to divine and the oracle catches hold of my wife saying that the fathers are angry. We ask what they are angry about, and the answer is 'cattle'. Then I, the father of the girl, go with a cow and leave it and return. My wife and daughter remain there. They pray and pray and the girl conceives.

It is clear, therefore, that the shades are present in intercourse and control conception. At marriage the shade of her father must 'move aside a little' so that the bride may conceive, and she herself becomes dangerous to her mother (and in a lesser degree to her father) because she has mingled her blood with that of another lineage. Mingling the blood of different lineages is dangerous and a bride can safely meet her mother only after performing a ritual in which her parents, as well as herself, become 'one flesh' with her husband. 'When a bride brings a hen and millet to her mother it is to say: "Mother, I have wiped my husband's genitals, I have grown up." ' All our informants were agreed that this *ilibalaga* or *ilibuko* (both words are used) is to safeguard the mother's health, particularly to prevent her suffering from diarrhœa. Mwandisi's statement was clear:

In the puberty ritual, when a bride has come from her husband, having lain with him, she catches hold of a little millet and a fowl without washing herself and carries them to her mother. The mother eats it with the fowl that her belly may be firm. If the daughter does not bring these things, then, when she drinks from the same calabash as her mother, she oversteps her mother, who has diarrhœa. Yes, the illness comes from the shades because she has come hot from the bed. . . . This diarrhœa comes from the belly when those below are angry and those above also. They say: 'The mother has overstepped the child' or 'The child has overstepped the mother'. If a girl has reached puberty we, the parents, do not come together until she has gone to her husband and lain with him. If we have intercourse we

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, MuNgonde

881 overstep our child, she will be barren and not bear children, but when
585 she has lain with her husband then we two lie together again.
783
753 Kasitile identified the hen with the body of the girl, the millet
834 with the seed of her husband, and a daughter going to the back of her mother's hut (*kosofu*), or drinking out of the common calabash, as meeting with her mother.

> If she does this before she has brought a fowl she soils her mother. Her mother develops diarrhœa. That is getting rid of the dirt (*kokusosya ubunyali*). . . . The mother's diarrhœa is like that from adultery. If my wife lies with a man in the bush, and I lie with her also, she soils the food which I eat with her, it is dirty, and I have diarrhœa, it is to get rid of the filth. . . . Yes, even though we do not lie together, I get a little diarrhœa, the filth of my wife.
>
> QUESTION: Is the *ilibalaga* to drive away the shade again?
>
> KASITILE: No, it is something else. It is to save the mother that she may not have diarrhœa and may not become weak.

881 The explanation given of the Kukwe *ilibuko* rite makes clear
585 that it is a symbolic mingling of 'the blood' of son-in-law and mother-in-law, which makes contact between them (through the bride) safe.

881 Failure to bring the *ilibalaga* is thought sometimes to result
585 in very serious illness. One of the wives of our neighbour,
753 Mwakobela, was delirious. We asked what the cause was. He replied:

> Her daughter reached puberty and went to her husband, but refused to drink with her mother. She just came and took water in the calabash cup, she brought nothing from her husband. . . . If the husband is poor a girl brings a fowl for drinking with her mother. . . . The divination said: 'It's the girl.'
>
> QUESTION: Why did she not bring a hen from her husband?
>
> MWAKOBELA: He is not a man of wisdom, he's very harsh, and a fool.

881 After the *ilibalaga* has been eaten by her parents a bride is no
585 longer dangerous to them, and she, fortified by the various treat-
606 ments with *undumila* and *ikipiki* medicines, no longer fears the 'heavy ones'. The critical periods of first menstruation and first intercourse are past. But the rule of avoidance between her and her father-in-law (and those identified with him) continues through life and is directly associated by the Nyakyusa with the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

(from under the bed) in the morning it has the filth of intercourse on it, then the father and mother should eat it. If this is not done they will fall ill with diarrhœa. If the hen is taken alive some eat it and others do not.'

After discussing this rite Mwasalemba went on:

> You know, also, that when a girl has gone through the puberty ritual at her husband's she must not take firewood from her mother's rafters (*kwijulu*) until she is obviously pregnant. Before then, while she is lying with her husband, she must not. We say: 'How can you take your mother's firewood when you are sleeping with your husband?' It is just the same whether the mother is old or young. If the bride goes through the ritual without sleeping with her husband that is all right; it is when she begins to sleep with him that she begins to avoid her mother's loft. At that time I, the father, may meet her mother and sleep with her, but with *coitus interruptus*. I must not make her pregnant. The daughter must begin. As soon as she is pregnant then we parents can begin to conceive a child again. If we do so before our daughter, then she will never bear a child at all, and others will say: 'How could you overstep your daughter?'

Avoidance between father-in-law and daughter-in-law is observed as in Selya, but is slightly less strict.

(*b*) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

As has already been indicated, the symbolism of the Kukwe ritual of puberty is similar to that of Selya. The same actions are interpreted in exactly the same way and, where actions differ somewhat, they are still interpreted as expressing the same general conceptions. For example, the Kukwe bride and groom make fire together by friction and eat porridge cooked on it, whereas a bride in Selya eats bananas with powdered medicine, but both actions are symbols of sexual intercourse. Both in Selya and in Kukwe country the bride is purified and, as part of the process of purification, the shade of her father's lineage is driven from her body; but only among the Kukwe is this symbolized by sitting in a running stream and allowing the water to wash away pebbles from between her fingers and toes.

That there may be no doubt about the interpretation of the Kukwe ritual we again quote a number of statements by Nyakyusa informants. These refer specifically to the Kukwe form of the puberty ritual.

Chief Porokoto's wives, discussing the ritual together, were em-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

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MUNGASALWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

[863]

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujegejala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukusumbulila* and giving gifts at the *ukugwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

[831]

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris.

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Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Porokoto's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwasalemba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the clefts of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body." '

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QUESTION: In the puberty ritual?

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MWASALEMBA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these stones, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not treat the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

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QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

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MWASALEMBA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished treating our child; when we have finished, and have treated her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
KuKwe

881 When we have finished the
834 ritual I come together with my wife again, but if our child is unmarried
[833] it is taboo to procreate a child, we practise *coitus interruptus*, the semen falls on the mat. . . . This is until the girl goes to her husband, until she is married. If my wife wears a bark-cloth I say to her during our daughter's puberty ritual: 'Arrange your bark-cloth carefully lest I, the man, desire you, I shall catch hold of you and we will cause the shade to make our child barren.' When she has gone to her husband we say our shade has finished, he has gone away in the water. Our child has gone to another shade. Yes, she also has intercourse with her husband at his home, but that does not matter, I have intercourse with my wife.

834 He was emphatic that the parents begin full intercourse as soon as the girl goes to her husband, it is not necessary to wait for her to become pregnant.

833 QUESTION: What do the spirits do in intercourse?

775 MWASALEMBA: The shade causes my penis to stand up and says: 'Go to the woman, there.' And also the woman's shade says: 'Your husband comes into you.' It is the shades which create desire, then we have intercourse, the shades meet together, hers—the woman's—and mine. If I do not go to my wife the shade says: 'Why, what's wrong with my place? Are there thorns? Why do you not enter?' They brood over (*bikobatela*) us both, both me and my wife.

QUESTION: What do they want?

MWASALEMBA: They want to create a child.

838 QUESTION: Why then do men desire masturbation and sodomy? [At
775 first when I asked this he said: 'No, the shade is a woman,' but then he
839 corrected himself].

MWASALEMBA: It is the shade which creates this desire, we have it within. A youth masturbates, the semen falls on the ground—perhaps two youths; it's also the shade. And a woman also masturbates. . .

775 QUESTION: You perform the rituals for many reasons?

771 MWASALEMBA: Yes, if we do not perform the rituals the shade broods on us and we do not bear children. Perhaps he broods on the crops, and they do not grow well but poorly, perhaps we run mad.

On another occasion Mwasalemba said:

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833 The shade is in the heart. It is the shade which desires to go to a woman, which causes us men to have erections and excites desire in women. If you have not got the shade you are impotent, you do not go to women. We say: 'The shade has brooded over this man, why do they not rouse him to go to women?' He just looks at women. Then the shade rouses up in the belly and says: 'Ha!' It rouses up and the man has intercourse with a woman. If it has brooded over him, it does not

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

her husband may give her *ikipiki* to rub on her hands and on a stick with which she touches each of the cattle. She gives them *ikipiki* that they may not be "empty". Then she can clean out the byre at any time.'

A third idea that recurs, again and again, is that of *ukukilanya*, overstepping, which is used in both a literal and a metaphorical sense. It is taboo for a woman to step over her husband in any way, hence there are explicit rules (taught during initiation) on posture in intercourse. It she should step over him it is said that 'his legs will swell' and he has grounds for divorcing her. It is taboo for an adult to step over a child and for a woman who is having intercourse to step over one who is not, though a child may step over an adult and a virgin or youth who is not having intercourse may step over a married person of the same sex who is not. In a society in which everyone sits on the ground, often with legs outstretched, observance of the taboo necessitates care.

In its metaphorical sense *ukukilyana* is used for a 'heavy' person coming into close contact with an 'empty' one, as, for example, a woman who is sleeping with her husband entering the hut of a woman with a new-born child, or the mother of a bride resuming intercourse before her daughter has had intercourse, or a bride who has not yet brought the *ilibalaga*, the symbol of her union with her husband, to her parents, drinking from her mother's calabash, or entering the inner part of her hut; or a wife who has committed adultery cooking for her husband. It is used, too, of a woman who continues to bear children after the marriage of her son for, it is said, if she does so the son's wife will never conceive at all, or will be long in conceiving, or her child will not walk, on account of a curse.

MWAIKAMBO: It is not customary for mother and son both to have infants. Women mostly begin to stop intercourse when their sons marry. They say it is not good that both mother and son should have small children, because the mother of the young man now thinks of helping her daughter-in-law in nourishing her children. If mother and son both have babies, people are much astonished and say it is not a good custom; they create a curse (*ikigune*) and the fertility of the son and his wife rots.

Mwaihojo's wife put it this way:

I leave off having children when my son is married for I should receive my grandchild in my arms, and care for my grandchildren, and be with them in the house.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

195 *Ukukinda* means to pass, to surpass, and *ukukilanya* (overstepping), in its metaphorical use, implies that 'one has power and the other is weak, so the powerful one does some injury to the weak one'.

834 842 [753] Fourthly, as was made apparent in the puberty ritual, it is held to be dangerous to 'mix bloods'. Adultery is not only an infringement of the exclusive rights of a husband, but it may injure him directly, causing him to have diarrhœa, which is a 'getting rid of the filth' due to contact with a strange 'blood'. It was implied that intercourse with a menstruating woman was in some sense 'mixing bloods' also, and the danger to parents of contact with a newly-married daughter before a precautionary ritual has been performed, stems from the same thing; the parents, through their daughter, are brought into contact with the blood of another lineage, that of the new son-in-law.

843 Besides being 'heavy' and therefore liable to 'overstep' others, a pregnant woman is thought to reduce the quantity of any grain she approaches, for the foetus within her is voracious and snatches it. Therefore neither she nor her husband (who participates in her condition) may approach other people's millet[1] or beans or oil-seeds spread out to dry, or speak to those who are reaping or grinding or stamping or brewing, without making a gesture of good-will by spitting on a pebble or knotting a leaf, and throwing it into the heap of grain. The sanction is fear of a miscarriage, for the owners of the food may have used medicines 'so that the food may be much and people be astonished'. Her own crops a pregnant woman may handle freely, and a chief's wife does not observe the taboo in her own village.

Two or three quotations will make these conceptions clearer:

ANGOMBWIKE: When my wife has conceived they say we are both 'heavy', both my wife and I. Then, if oil-seeds or millet are out drying in the sun, they tell us not to speak. 'You are heavy ones,' they say. So we are silent. They say that if there is talking we will catch hold of the oil-seeds or millet, and it will diminish. Yes, I must avoid the grain even though I am alone, because I am heavy.

KASITILE: Maize does not vanish but millet and beans. The child which is being made bewitches them; they disappear. . . . The child has opened its mouth wide, its jaws gape.[2] It is that child which is being

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[1] Some held that millet was the only grain affected; others maintained that maize was also.

[2] *Umwana apambwile ulupambo nkanwa. Ulupambo* is used of the gaping jaws of a crocodile.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

like activities; things which are felt to be alike are often felt to be antagonistic. We have shown that certain of the pregnancy taboos are interpreted in terms of the opposition between seed in plants and seed in the womb, and between pumpkins in the field and pumpkins in the vagina, and we have touched on the opposition between procreation and war. Sexual intercourse, 'the war of the mats', is directly compared with war; the two are felt to be alike and therefore incompatible. Association with a menstruating or parturient woman is felt to be weakening to a warrior; continence of a warrior before battle is enjoined—'men feared to die quickly if they slept with their wives just before war.' Moreover, a menstruating wife never touches her husband's weapons lest they be weakened.

Hunting is classed with war and the same taboos apply. Added to them is the notion that, since a pregnant woman is often angry, the animals her husband hunts will be angry also, and he is in much greater danger than an ordinary hunter.

ANGOMBWIKE: If you go into the bush and you have left your wife heavy, at home, if you meet a lion it will not run off, but will injure you, maul you. And if you are many, a leopard or a lion will attack you, the heavy one, not the others.

QUESTION: Why?

ANGOMBWIKE: It is as if there was much anger. And we've noticed something else, if a lion attacks cattle it always attacks a cow in calf. And another thing. If a woman is heavy she is very bad-tempered (*nkali*), it's like a passion. Perhaps the woman is bad-tempered or perhaps good, and you, the husband, are bad-tempered. Pregnancy shows in many ways. . . .

A pregnant woman has a great fire in her body, she sweats a lot and is passionate (*nelyojo*), she is fierce (*nkali*). That fire is strong; we all flee from the woman, we all dislike her. And when pregnancy begins the animals in the bush wish to kill you, the husband. That fierceness [the fire] makes them hate you; you are like a twin. A first-born child is very fierce (*nkali*), so a woman is very passionate and sweats a great deal.

His wife's pregnancy puts a man in danger from wild animals, and so does a quarrel with her, quite apart from the pregnancy which tends to produce such quarrels. Mwaisumo said: 'If I go hunting after quarrelling with my wife it is very dangerous, I might be killed by a wild animal.'

Besides the idea that animals will *attack* the husband of a preg-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

coughing disease to the owners of the house.... Pagans used to fear to let those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both man and woman, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires (*myoto*).... But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it, and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow that has been with the bull. 'They say: "We will harm the cow. It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women.'

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We quote Mwambuputa, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men do not fear, but women still do.

(*b*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the birth of the first child, *umwana gwa busungu*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house, 'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e. grandson]." ' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

845 this is eaten by the relative who receives the *ilibalaga*, after he has buried it. He who receives the *ilibalaga* buries it, and while he is doing so he looks up country to the origin of the Nyakyusa, who moved down to the plain (MuNgonde); the officiant then tells them all to look up country. . . . The mother of twins meets her family and it means: 'I am all right now, I am clear, I am your friend, Kyala had bound me. . . .' On reaching home the woman waits on the path . . . her husband (who has been with the *ilibalaga* to his people) likewise waits for his wife. . . . Then they both advance together and meet, and go into their house [not the temporary hut] and eat and drink together. This eating and drinking together means that their ritual is finished; they say: 'We have survived that rubbishy Kyala who had bound us (*tuponile kwa lyaKyala ili lya tupinile*).'[1] They eat the food which has come from their two families together, first drinking together the beer. This is the end of the twin ritual as it has always been performed. People avoid the parents of twins for they say: 'He brings disease into our family.'

845 From the time the twins are born until he meets their mother
●834 ritually, intercourse with any woman is taboo to the father of twins. After the ritual he may live with the mother (though she should not conceive again until the twins are running about), but he cannot visit his other wives. Only when she has given birth again—and had a normal delivery—is he free to live with his
[753] other wives. Should he break this taboo it is believed that the wife with whom he breaks it will fall grievously ill with swelling of the legs and belly, and her father is entitled to claim a cow as damages. Some polygynists are said to circumvent the taboo in this way:

> The husband will go to the father of one of his wives and will take a cow to him and say: 'I have got twins, I petition for your daughter.' Then he can take her into his house and sleep with her, but with his other wives he cannot sleep until she has borne a child. When she does so, then he goes to the fathers of his other wives, taking a bull to each, and says: 'I have had a twin birth but now it is finished, and I am taking your daughters.' If the first wife thus taken bears no child, then he must take a cow to the father of another and try with her.
>
> But several of our informants held that no father in his senses would permit his daughter to be taken by her husband after he had fathered twins, until the mother of twins had herself borne a normal child.

845 The isolation of the parents of twins from cattle also continues for some time. The father of twins does does not milk or enter a

[1] Mwaikambo, commenting on the text, said: 'It is as if Kyala was *lisalu* (rubbish).' The concord implies *ilisalu* not a person, as is usual with the proper name Kyala.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

they take hold of the corpse. But they wait for the doctor; if they do not do so the same disease will come—a swelling of legs and diarrhœa. An ordinary corpse is not feared in this way.

Yes, a man fears to take his other wives. He says: 'If I just go to them I shall give them the disease of the twins that I begot with this wife.' The wife he takes without precaution will swell in the legs and stomach, and pass blood with her stools. He first tries to have a child with the wife who bore twins, waiting till the twins are walking about. He lies with the mother of the twins but withdraws, and then, when the children are grown, he impregnates her. He does not go to the other wives. And if he asks for another wife before trying to impregnate the mother of the twins her father will refuse. If he takes her without asking, her father will make him pay a cow. He can only ask for another wife if the mother of the twins does not conceive. For one month[1] the husband refrains altogether from intercourse, then after the ritual he goes to his wife (the mother of the twins) but does not impregnate her. . . . A man is supposed to tell the twin doctor before he begets another child with his wife. He must do it openly, and not in secret. It is taboo to do it secretly. Nothing happens, but the doctor is angry, saying: 'Why did you not tell me, the doctor, the owner of the body?'

Themes already familiar from the death and puberty–marriage rituals recur again here. The parents of twins are isolated and cleansed like mourners and nubile girls. Contact with them is held to be dangerous because 'those below'—in this case Kyala and Mbasi rather than the shades—have brooded over them, and must be driven off before normal procreation can be resumed. After their isolation the *ilibalaga*—the symbol of their ritual union—must be offered to the shades of both lineages, that of the man and that of the woman. There is also the eating of balls of porridge, the symbol, in the other rituals, of the actions of a madman, but the fear of madness was not adduced by our informants as the purpose of the twin ritual; rather it is the formidable potency which produces two children instead of one, that is the danger—'the parents of twins have a fire'—and men protect themselves against it by burning themselves with hot medicines. They 'burn the twin birth'.

[1] Presumably longer when the seclusion and ritual lasted longer.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

or his crops fail, or his cattle die, he reflects on any quarrels he may have had with kinsmen or affines or neighbours, and on any rituals he should have performed and has omitted wholly or in part. He may be quite clear in his own mind that the misfortune is due to some particular wrong-doing (*isengwa*)—perhaps a quarrel with a brother, or neglect to kill for his new neighbours on his inheritance from his father—and proceed directly to patch up the quarrel and perform the neglected ritual. More often he thinks of several possible causes and lays them before the oracle, relying upon it to select between them. How several possible causes of misfortune occurred to the chief sufferers, their kinsmen and neighbours, is shown in the cases of Enesi, Katasya, Mwambuputa and Mpoma quoted at the end of the book (pp. 258 ff.).

No linguistic distinction is made between an offence punished by the courts and one thought to be punished by the shades; both are wrong-doings (*isengwa*), and there is no sharp distinction between an offence against a living kinsman and an offence against a dead one. In short, there is no clear conception of 'sin' as opposed to 'tort' or 'crime'.

There are two themes constantly recurring in Nyakyusa theology: firstly, men must observe the traditional rituals (both positive and negative) or they will go mad; and secondly, the anger of senior relatives and neighbours will injure unless it is confessed and goodwill expressed.

The first conception is a magical one:[1] what is required is the performance or avoidance of particular acts in a particular form on particular occasions; the second is sacramental, it is 'anger in the heart' that is dangerous, and no ritual is held to be efficacious without a change of heart.

Often the two conceptions are not consciously related to one another: again and again one is told: 'The rituals must be performed or men will go mad,' and there is no reference to the state of mind of the performers; but on certain occasions they overlap explicitly, as when Kasitile adjured his kinsmen to confess all while they were performing the ritual to 'rot the ropes'; and always there is a symbolic connection, for the rituals themselves express the value of amity between kinsmen, of respect for seniors and obligation towards juniors.

The neglect of the marriage ritual is itself an expression of disrespect for parents or parents-in-law, and a breach of the sex code,

[1] In the sense defined by G. & M. Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, pp. 89-95.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

[585] of which the basic rule is the separation of the reproductive
834 activities of successive generations.

If my wife goes to the inner part of my mother's house, it is a wrong. Perhaps she will bear a thin and sickly child. She has gone to the inner part of her in-law's house and my mother is angry with her for going where my father goes. Perhaps, when she is first pregnant, my wife goes to the back of her own mother's house. That is a wrong, too. Perhaps she will have a difficult labour. The trouble in both cases comes from the anger of the elders, my mother's in the first case, her mother's in the second. It is said that if my wives have seen my father by inheritance, then, when I die, the fathers who are dead will not receive me because I have injured ('kept back') their younger brother. I think, for my part, that the pagans honour this custom [of avoidance] very much because they say that the shades will be angry if it is neglected.

778 673 578 681 Apart from the neglect of rituals, the types of behaviour commonly believed to be directly punished by the shades are (1) quarrels between father and son or between brothers, turning on the seduction of a senior's wife by his junior, on the sharing of marriage-cattle or, nowadays, on the sharing of the earnings of a young man working for wages, or on his seduction of women which necessitates the payment of fines by his father; (2) quarrels between father and daughter or father-in-law and son-in-law turning on the handing over of marriage-cattle by the son-in-law and the provision of gifts for his daughter by the father; (3) quarrels between husband and wife; (4) quarrels between relatives of all sorts over failure to attend, or to invite to, rituals; and (5) the neglect of his wards by the heir.

578 775 Cases of family quarrels over seduction leading to misfortune have already been quoted (pp. 134-5; 187-8). One concerning cattle and earnings was cited by Mwakweletebeja. A young man, X., went out to work and left the cattle he earned with his elder full brother. When he married he took all these cattle and gave them to his father-in-law. His elder brother was very angry. X. said: 'I take all the cattle for you have never given me any of yours.' His brother replied: 'How could I give you cows? I have no children.' Then all the cattle X. had given to his father-in-law died and had to be replaced. 'The shades were angry because when the younger brother took the cows his elder brother complained very much.' And if a young man goes out to work and gives his father no share of his earnings the shades are angry: 'Perhaps I will fall ill; perhaps when I look for work I shall not

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

were dealt with by the local rulers or by the family-heads, not by the central authorities. It was only occasionally that general fears or misfortunes turned all men's thoughts together to Mbande.

Now the great-commoners of every chief were believed to have independent access to his ancestral spirits and this gave them a spiritual hold over him. If they compared him too unfavourably with his predecessors then, it was believed, those predecessors might hear and afflict him in various ways. And so it was also with the nobles of Ngonde and the reigning Kyungu. But as this belief was intimately linked with the belief in witchcraft it will be more conveniently analysed in that context.[1]

(b) *THE MAGICAL ELEMENT.*

Magic (the belief that certain particular objects, events, words or actions, involving particular people in particular situations, possessed in themselves an extraordinary power) was an essential ingredient of the old pagan religion of Ngonde. While the greatest magical object in the country was, traditionally, the body of the Kyungu. And the fact that the central political authority of Ngonde was so largely vested in the nobles of Ngonde was due above all to their responsibility for controlling this magical object in the public interest.

If the Kyungu cut himself, and more particularly if his blood fell to the ground, then it was the duty of the nobles of Ngonde to kill him, lest the whole land be afflicted with disease; and if he was ill likewise. "They considered that if his blood fell to the ground that was his life falling. And they likened him to a god, considering it taboo for a god to be wounded; they thought that if his blood fell to the ground it would turn into a sickness and all the people would die. And so, when the Kyungu was wounded, they thought it best to put him out of the way and start afresh with a new one. They thought it taboo for him to have even the tiniest wound on his body. And it was equally taboo for him to fall ill; everyone else, it was believed, would fall ill too; it was better to put him out of the way so that the people should keep well."

In consequence of this belief elaborate precautions were taken to maintain the Kyungu's health. Sexual impurity was believed to be magically dangerous to health in many ways and so the Kyungu, above all men, must be guarded from it. It was not considered safe even for his own wives to cook his food, lest one of them touch it during a menstrual period, and so young boys who had not yet reached puberty

[1] *Vide infra* portion 3 (d).

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

cooked it instead. One of the reasons for killing most of his sons, as we have seen, was to lessen the danger of his wives committing adultery with them, for adultery was a magical cause of sickness. His wives themselves were jealously guarded.

Then again a Kyungu might not wade across the river lest the act of doing so should magically bring a deluge of rain from heaven, he had always to be carried.

And the breath and the growing parts of a Kyungu's body—his hair and nails and the constantly replaced mucus of his nose—were believed to be magically connected with the fertility of the Ngonde plain. When he was killed his nostrils were stopped so that he was buried "with breath in his body"; while portions of his hair and nails and of his nasal mucus were taken from him beforehand and buried later by the nobles of Ngonde in the black mud near the river. This action was believed to "close up the land, to keep it rich and heavy and fertile, as it was when he himself lived in it."

Now the Lwembe of Lubaga had equally magical flesh, but the other chiefs of Ngonde and the Nyakyusa had not. They could wade across rivers, fall ill and be wounded without endangering their subjects. But of all alike the breath and the hair and nails had a magical importance. Every ruling chief in both areas had his nostrils stopped by his great-commoners when nearing death, while portions of his hair and nails[1] were taken from him when living and buried after his death in a special place. The hair and nails were held to be magically connected through their growth with the growth of crops. "You see these nails of yours," said the man who explained the symbolism to us, "if you cut them do they not grow again?" (They do.) "And where does their growth come from? Does it not come from within the body?" (It does.) "Well then that is the reason, the great-commoners take power of growth from the chief in the form of his nails and hair."

Besides his magical body the Kyungu had a host of magical possessions. There was the iron stool *Kisumbi* on which he was set at his accession; once he had sat upon it he could not flee the position or he would die. There was the drum *Mwenekelwa* whose note was believed to be heard by the most distant of the Kyungu's subjects. When it was beaten "all the little nobles from afar off would hear and obey the summons; they would all come together. Then we would tell them that so and so had not brought any ivory for a long time! Then they would come with tusks as tribute, to pay worship to the Kyungu." But sometimes the drum would refuse to sound and they would kill a

[1] We were only told about the nasal mucus in the case of the Kyungu.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

married. Thus, yet another bond is forged between chief and headman, for he who provides marriage cattle is 'father' to him who marries, and the chief's wives acknowledge this by avoiding the village headmen of the senior generation as they do their father-in-law. Once the chief's ritual marriage is complete the sex taboo is lifted and such of his men as are already married are joined by their wives. In theory, though not nowadays in practice, the taboo is observed until the marriage of the chief.

All through the ritual of the 'coming out' the idea of a new beginning is expressed—a new site for the villages, new houses, new fire, new power for the young men. The events of this ritual, the seclusion, the lying on a litter, the prohibition on washing, washing with medicines in the doorway of the hut, the admonition, are directly parallel to the events of the rituals of death and puberty which, we have argued in a previous book,[1] are dramatizations of death and rebirth. There seems little doubt that the 'coming out' is yet another celebration of this theme. The young men enter an enclosed house—that of the senior's mother—and 'come out' (*ukusoka*) renewed as a child 'comes out' (*ukusoka*) of the mother's womb. No Nyakyusa informant volunteered such an interpretation, but, when it was suggested, it was eagerly accepted as expressing the real meaning of 'coming out'.

(*b*) THE CHIEF'S MEDICINES

Reference has already been made to medicines used by chiefs and by village headmen at the 'coming out' and we must now examine them more closely. The great medicines of chieftainship are *ifingila* and their function is to create *amanga*, i.e. spiritual power, and *ubuziya*, i.e. dignity, majesty, in order to make the chief fearful 'so that men obey him'. The medicines are comparable to robes of office for they are designed to give their user assurance and fill the commonality with awe. The Nyakyusa also think that chiefs and headmen should be 'heavy' with 'pythons in their bellies' which give them the power to see and fight witches. Without such a 'python' a chief or village headman cannot fulfil his duty of 'watching over the country by day and by night' and if a man is not born with one he may develop it through the proper use of medicines. This notion has been examined elsewhere.[2] The *ifingila* medicines are also thought to give courage and ferocity (*ubugasi*) in war, with luck in seizing enemy

[1] *op. cit.*, p. 205. [2] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 97-102.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

chief, brought a bundle of firewood. Mwalukuta I was not expected to enter the grove and he went off soon. His brother and Nyama took a little basket of maize and millet. The chiefs stayed on the edge of the grove and the three commoners entered alone. Mwalukuta II and Nyama built a little hut five feet from the 'grave' with the saplings brought by Nyama's mother. 'We put firewood and food and a little calabash which we have prepared in it, it's for the shades.' The calabash contained millet, maize, pumpkin seeds, ground nuts, and cow peas; and a stem of bananas was put beside it. Mwalukuta swept the 'grave' which was marked by a few small trees, and Mwakasukula killed the cow, which must lie facing east to BuKinga. Mwalukuta spoke the invocation: 'Thou Mwakisambwe (30) . . . Mwakihaba (45) has gone back, but Mwamukinga (44) is here still. . . . Mwakihaba says, "I am no longer a relative, I have gone out." ' Then they took the sacred meat from the forelegs of the cow: that from the right leg was buried near the 'grave', that from the left by an *nkuju* tree (a species of *ficus*) forty paces away. The priests ate some roasted meat and intestines with bananas, and the rest of the meat was divided between them and the chiefs. The head went to Nyama's house and was kept for three nights. The priests explained that they are forbidden to bathe for three days or lie with their wives, but on the fourth day they eat the head and after that they bathe and resume married life.

Eighteen days after the sacrifice Mwalukuta went to look and found the stem of bananas which had been left in the little hut had ripened, and the earth on the grave had been disturbed. This was a good omen. But later his legs began to trouble him—he could scarcely walk—and it was said that certain priests who should have been called to the ritual had not been summoned and were angry and had cursed him. He fled to a distance and sought a bull to kill for his fellows.

(*d*) SACRIFICE AT KABALE

The form of sacrifice among the Kukwe is very similar. We never saw a sacrifice at Kabale—our friends assured us that they had been dropped before 1935—but a description by two of the leading priests of the grove of Kabale demonstrates the similarity between the rituals there and in Selya. The only points of difference were that the Kukwe sacrificed fowls as well as cattle, and granddaughters shared the sacred food with grandsons.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

789 778 them first, then his grandfather, and father. Others told us that rain stones always came from Kisi country, a very wet strip of land on the north-east shore of the Lake where the clouds always seem to gather when one looks south from the Nyakyusa valley and plain, and a piece of perforated wood used in Ngonde for making rain came from the hills of Misuku, also a very wet country. Kasitile's stones were of two types, but no direct association of male and female was made. However, the Kukwe spoke of a 'mother' stone having young. 'The rain-maker puts back the stone in the potsherd without water (after rain has come) and going later he finds that it has got young, perhaps seven, with the mother there are eight.'

791 [784] [262] The rain-makers are subject to certain taboos: during the dry season they may not wash lest they drive away the rain nor do they shave for 'they compare hair and clouds saying, "Let it be black", they compare a bald pate with sunshine.' And the rain-maker may not eat roasted maize 'for as the maize crackles in the potsherd when it is roasted, so the thunder will crackle in the sky'. He may not eat green maize (which is reaped during the rains) until the dry weather begins 'because he creates rain, which means he creates all the food which grows with the rain'. If he begins eating too soon he may stop the growth. And when the rain-maker is manipulating his instruments a sex taboo is observed.

● [834] 'When I am making rain,' said Kasitile, 'I do not sleep with my wives for two days, it's taboo. How would Kyala help us if I did?'

[643] In theory the rain-maker always works under the direction of the political authority—the Kyungu or a chief—but he is also thought to wreak vengeance on those who anger him. Kasitile was critical of his colleague in the hills above Isumba: 'He never makes a nice gentle rain, it always destroys food. . . . He is always demanding things from men, and, if they refuse, he brings his rain to destroy things. . . . There is a very strong wind and heavy rain which takes roofs off homes.' But when Kasitile himself was angry, because his son was taken as a tax defaulter to work on the roads, the weather grew bad.

[464] [687]

789 People say I am angry, that this rain is because they came and beat me because of tax. This time the tax collectors came to my place and beat me and when I thought, 'It is not the custom with our forefathers for the tax collectors to come at all to men like me', I grew angry and prayed. . . . When I was in MuNgonde the country suffered from hunger, all their children were in trouble, . . . Then I came up, and

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

All the time there was a constant refrain of questioning, especially from Mwamakunda (who as Kasitile's assistant acts as his mouthpiece to the others: 'But why has Mwakanjoki (60) gone off in a huff? Why?' There was a continuous effort to extract reasons. [783] [782]

The meat from the top of the foreleg (*ijammapa*) was cut up into little portions and some was put aside for the boys, sons of Kasitile. Then Kasitile led the way with a bill-hook and Mwamakunda and I followed. Mwamakunda carried the meat in a leaf. We went to the sacred grove, Kinyangwa. When we reached the edge Kasitile told us to wait and he cut a path into the middle with the bill-hook, then we followed. [778]

Mwamakunda threw the meat slowly, piece by piece, into the rotting stump of an old *umuvali* tree, from which a lusty growth had sprung, one shoot being 30 feet high. Kasitile prayed: 'Come Mwakanjoki (60), together with Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), and the Kinga, come, with—with—with—come. We pray of you millet, maize, bananas, all your food.' (Mwamakunda threw a piece of meat at each word.) 'We are still mourning you, we have tears. We finish now, that is all. Bring bananas, bring millet, maize, children, may the cows calve, stand by us Mwakanjoki (60), N—, N—, N— Lwembe (3?), Mwakalebela (19), Nsyanigwe,[1] Kyamba Kitali,[1] Ngulube (9), N—, N—, N—. Don't come again Mwakanjoki, let us sleep well. This is Mwambagoje [i.e. Mwamakunda the younger. It was his first visit to the sacred grove in place of his father]. I have brought him to you. Do not be startled at this Mwaipaja (G.W.), he is innocent, he is our friend. Move out of my body, let this chill go from my body! We have finished! Amen!' [769]

Kasitile and Mwamakunda gave instructions and suggestions to each other in low voices from time to time during the prayer and throwing of the meat. We went out, Kasitile and Mwamakunda looking ahead, and Kasitile warned me: 'Do not look behind, Mwaipaja.' For the next two days Kasitile said he and Mwamakunda would wash with medicines, and refrain from intercourse with their wives 'because they entered the sacred grove'. [834]

Then we rejoined Mwaipopo and the priests and the meat was cut up. Mwaipopo said: 'Indeed people gossip, where does the whispering go? To whom do the words go? Perhaps they went to you (the commoner) priests?' Kasitile had something on his mind: 'When I returned from Lubaga who came to say: "Thank you, you have arrived back?" [i.e. no one came to greet him formally on his return]. Njobakosa answered this saying that no offence was meant. [689]

Then Njobakosa turned to Mwaipopo (116) and raised the question of his son, Mwaseba (152) who had seduced Mwaipopo's wife, Mpeta. [684]

[1] The hereditary Kinga priests. [793]

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The negative rituals—the taboos which surround the procreative functions—disappear rather slowly, but a Christian father will enter his wife's hut to greet her after she has given birth to a child, and will eat food cooked by her a week or two later, which the pagans think extremely rash. An atmosphere of scepticism and experiment begins to develop; a few Christians spoke of breaking even the deeply-entrenched taboos surrounding menstruation 'to see what happened'. But that many Christians, especially women, feared the old taboos was apparent when one watched the behaviour of Christian daughters-in-law towards their fathers-in-law. In theory Christians disregarded the rules of avoidance if their fathers-in-law are Christian, or avoid 'only a little', but in practice a Christian woman is usually embarrassed and fearful if, by mischance, she meets her father-in-law face to face.[1]

Christians withdraw from the pagan communal rituals even more completely than they do from the rituals of kinship. No Christian takes any part in the sacrifices to the heroes, or at the groves of chiefs, or in cleansing the country, or in rain-making, or sprinkling the homesteads. As for the ritual of chieftainship, from that also Christians withdraw. At the time we were first in BuNyakyusa only two chiefs were professing Christians, one of whom was already baptized before his installation. The 'coming out' performed for him was much curtailed since he refused to use the traditional medicines and, because of the difficulty over medicines, Christians were not acceptable as village headmen. In Ngonde, where the proportion of Christians was much greater, there were Christian headmen and chiefs, but the ritual of 'coming out' had disappeared altogether, and the Kyungu had delegated the celebration of all pagan rituals to one of his councillors who still believed in them, he himself being a sceptic.

There are tales of the early missionaries visiting the groves to challenge pagan belief. The pagans believe that they were confounded and some of the more conservative Christians also think that the terror of the grove drove the Reverend — Jauer from Lubaga (*vide supra*, p. 29) and that *because* the Reverend — Kleus summoned the teachers and school children to a feast in the grove of Mbyanga, and killed 'a black cow' for them there, a season of plenty followed. 'Many people said: "He seems to have been advised by someone, why did he go to Mbyanga and sing

[1] For an account of such a meeting, cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 84-5.